

## **Talking Points for Mark Up of H.R. 2017**

In 1998, Congress took an historic step toward repairing the broken lives of thousands of men and women. Now we have to go even further both to help the victims of torture and to reach out to those who still have no place to turn in their suffering. I hope my colleagues here today will join me in supporting H.R. 2017, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act.

Nationwide, there are an estimated 400,000 torture survivors, most of whom came to the United States as refugees. Worldwide, it is impossible to count the numbers. While we redouble our efforts to prevent and punish the perpetrators of torture, we must continue to seek to heal its victims.

**Section 2 of H.R. 2017** is a statement of policy designed to ensure that, domestically, particular attention is given to regions with significant immigrant and refugee populations and, abroad, particular attention is given to supporting treatment centers and programs in emerging democracies and in post-conflict environments.

**Section 4** of the new bill authorizes \$12 million for FY 2006 and \$13 million for FY 2007 for centers and programs administered through USAID's Victims of Torture Fund. Non-governmental organizations that receive this funding provide direct services to survivors, their families, and communities. They also strengthen institutions on the ground and the indigenous capacity of these institutions to deliver services to survivors. In addition to providing treatment, many of these programs advocate for the elimination of torture in their countries.

**Section 5** authorizes \$7 million for FY 2006 and \$ 8 million for FY 2007 for the UN Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture. In 2001 -- in that year alone -- the UN Fund assisted 77,928 victims of torture.

As our witnesses have testified, the impact of torture can be felt throughout society for years: lives are broken and lost; often political activists as well as their families and communities are frightened and become disengaged from public life; trust in public institutions is destroyed; political apathy is a lesson learned and lived out every day. Unless we find ways to understand and to heal the legacy of torture, our efforts to build democratic institutions around the globe will fail.

You can't help but be proud of the help this country has given to torture victims around the globe. But when you start looking at the numbers and at the scope of the problem, you see that the need far outstrips the services available. We should not turn our backs on that suffering.